NINTENDO GAMECUBE

METAL GEAR SOLID

THE TWIN SNAKES

Survival Guide:
In The Darkness of Shadow Moses

メタルギア ソリッド ザ・ツインスネークス
サバイバル・ガイド：シャドー・モセスの真実

English Translation by Bruno de Figueiredo

メタルギア ソリッド

攻略に役立つ シナリオ徹底解説!!

ザ・ツインスネークス がわかる!

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"Bring it on, Hollywood movies!"
This isn't a game about revolution—
It is a revolution in gaming!

"Guevara" reunited!? Once upon a time, a group of passionate Japanese game creators set out to spark a revolution in gaming. They formed a team named after the Cuban revolutionary fighter—Guevara.

Even now, those members are scattered across the country, each carrying on their resistance activities in their own way. At the heart of this revolutionary game group "Guevara" were none other than game creator Kazutoshi Iida (pictured right; known for Aquanaut's Holiday and Doshin the Giant) and the legendary Hideo Kojima, director of the Metal Gear Solid series (also pictured right). Both have released games for the Nintendo GameCube and have rekindled a camaraderie akin to that of fellow revolutionaries. These two game creators delve into the soul of resistance embedded in Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes. With a defiant stance toward Hollywood films, the spirit of Japan's Showa era pulls the trigger on the world stage.

DIALOGUE
Hideo Kojima × Kazutoshi Iida

1999
KOJIMA

The DNA of Japanese Cinema Hidden in Kojima's Works

● Today's conversation is about comparing Mr. Iida's vision of "Metal Gear Solid" with the reality seen through Director Kojima's eyes. Since Mr. Iida has come well-prepared, let's start from there!

Iida: "When it comes to METAL GEAR SOLID, it seems to be praised overseas as being on par with Hollywood films. But this time, I want to explore another side—Kojima-san's love of Japanese cinema. So I brought this."

Kojima: "Whoa! That's the DVD of Play by director Yasuzo Masumura!"

Iida: "Play" is like the Sid and Nancy of the Showa era. You actually gave this to me once at the Tokyo Game Show."

Kojima: "It's based on a story by Akiyuki Nosaka, right? Nosaka was born in 1930, the same year as my father. I was raised on works from that generation. This was during Japan's rapid economic growth—there was still a lot of poverty. The movie portrays a once-in-a-lifetime 'play' between a low-level yakuza and a poor girl. The lead, Keiko Sekine, has really thick panty lines in it."

Iida: "The yakuza senior who runs away with Keiko Sekine is played by Keizo Kanie. He throws a mean kick in the film! In the final scene, they're holding onto a boat, floating away—
'We're just drifting...'
'I don't care...'"

Kojima: "I think we watched Play during the METAL GEAR SOLID 2 training camp. Late at night, the whole team sat down and watched it. There's a scene where the yakuza says, 'You're beautiful,' and Sekine replies, 'Really? I just finished my period.' But then he says, 'I don't give a damn about that!' and they embrace... yeah."

● So Kojima-san, you also watched the 1960s Art Theatre Guild films?

Kojima: "Yeah, but not in real time. I caught them later on TV. Play especially—the go-go bar scene is amazing. 'Don't act cool!'. 'More!'. 'Like this? Like this?' - they shout while dancing."

Iida: "And of course, Kojima-san is also known to be a big fan of director Sogo Ishii. Today I brought a book from the time Burst City was released."

Kojima: "Whoa! That's rare! During the production of METAL GEAR SOLID, we actually went on a company trip to Nasu, and on the bus I played the Burst City video. But everyone fell asleep! I was so mad— 'You guys! Watch Ishii-sensei's movie!' (laughs) But then they all got motion sickness."

Iida: "(Laughs)"

● Between watching films on the bus and late-night screenings, it's clear that METAL GEAR SOLID has Japanese cinema in its DNA. By the way, when did you two first see Ishii's films?

Iida: "For me, it was in high school."

Kojima: "I didn't have the chance to see them in theaters since I was living in Kansai when they were released. I saw them later. I remember seeing the trailer for Crazy Thunder Road. I was in my third year of high school, trying to make it big by writing novels. But everyone around me was going to cram school and studying for university entrance exams, and I was frustrated. One day I saw an interview with Ishii on TV. When asked why he made films, he said, 'To get girls.' I thought, 'That's so cool!' So I read the Burst City novelization that had just come out."

Iida: "I believe Ishii was 25 when he made Burst City. One of his assistant directors at the time was Junji Sakamoto, who's now a respected filmmaker himself. And Maro Akaji was only 39 back then!"

Kojima: "After learning about Ishii, I couldn't sit still. I started writing again. Ishii is still cool today. He's a bit older than me, but we share the same cultural background. He doesn't trust established values—he questions, tests, and then acts."

● A real 'Don't trust anyone over 30' mindset. Back then, writing novels or making films was a way for young people to express their raw impulses.

Kojima: "I heard that Director Ishii's kids are grown up now, but apparently they're playing ANUBIS: ZONE OF THE ENDERS."

- Play
Released in 1971 (Showa 46), directed by Yasuzo Masumura. Starring Keiko Sekine (now Keiko Takahashi) and Masaaki Daimon. Based on Akiyuki Nosaka's story "Shinju Bentenjima". The story follows a delinquent youth who meets a 16-year-old girl working at a small factory, betrays his yakuza mentor, and runs away with her.

- Akiyuki Nosaka
Born in 1930 (Showa 5). Winner of the Naoki Prize for his novel "American Hijiki". Famous for portraying resilient people living among the ruins of postwar Japan, and often associated with the Yakeato Yamiichi-ha (Postwar Black Market School). Notable works include "The Pornographers" and "Grave of the Fireflies". He was also active as a singer and politician.

- Art Theatre Guild (ATG)
A distribution company that released highly artistic and experimental films from the 1960s to the 1980s. Renowned directors such as Nagisa Oshima and Kaneto Shindo presented works through ATG. Newcomers like Nobuhiko Obayashi, Kazuki Omori, and Yoshimitsu Morita also debuted under its banner.

- Burst City
Released in 1982 (Showa 57), directed by Sogo Ishii. Starring Takanori Jinnai (from THE ROCKERS) and Shinya Oe (from THE ROOSTERS). Set in a near-future ghost city, it's a film of chaos and madness where frustrated youth unleash their pent-up energy in a violent rebellion.

- Crazy Thunder Road
Released in 1980 (Showa 55), directed by Sogo Ishii. Starring Tatsuo Yamada and Masashi Kojima. Set in the legendary "Thunder Road," the story follows a protagonist who can no longer tolerate a defanged biker gang, and rides alone in full-throttle rebellion.A runaway film with no brakes—literally.

Family Feud Over a Superweapon

Iida: "Actually, there's this book out there. It's a rare, long-form ninja manga called Ninja Hicho written by Yoshiharu Tsuge. Back then, Sanpei Shirato's manga Ninja Bugeicho was popular, so Tsuge created this as a counter in a rental book publisher.

Kojima: "Haha, I see, I see."

Iida: "There were four volumes of Ninja Hicho at the time. Volumes 1 and 2 focus on the 'rapid-fire cannon.' Then volumes 3 and 4 introduce a weapon called the 'Thousand Killer' — a massive destructive weapon that collapses the castle's foundation stones, causing the stone walls to fall apart. Tsuge probably aimed for the stoic style of Shirato Sanpei's battles, but inevitably, it became very Tsuge-style. Before you know it, it's a story about fighting over a mass-killing weapon. That's exactly what reminded me of METAL GEAR SOLID. Or maybe not?"

Kojima: "METAL GEAR SOLID is a game where strange old guys appear one after another, announce themselves, and kill each other. That's a pretty Japanese thing, I think."

● Sounds like Sengoku warlords.

Kojima: "Even the villains always explain their ideology before fighting."

Iida: "And when the boss dies, he gives a long lecture before passing away."

Kojima: "That's influenced by the movie El Topo, at least for me."

Iida: "Powerful characters announce themselves and fight using all their ninja skills, just like FOXHOUND. In that sense, it's very Ninja Bugeicho style. By the way, Sanpei Shirato actually appeared in a movie directed by Yoshimitsu Morita called Tokimeki ni Shisu."

Kojima: "Oh, really?"

Iida: "Julie (Kenji Sawada) plays the lead in that movie, which features an intense suicide scene. He bites his own wrist vein and bleeds out. Speaking of Tokimeki, Kojima-san, while making METAL GEAR SOLID, you were also working behind the scenes on the Tokimeki Memorial drama series, right?"

● That's quite a stretch.

Kojima: "I was just the producer, though."

Iida: "So Kojima-san has that Sanpei Shirato-like artistic quality. That's all!"

● The common theme among Tsuge Yoshiharu's Ninja Hicho, Shirato Sanpei's Ninja Bugeicho, and Hideo Kojima's METAL GEAR SOLID might be that the protagonists are soldiers manipulated by the scheming powers.

Iida: "I see."

- Ninja Hicho is a rare long-form period drama manga drawn by Tsuge Yoshiharu at age 23, who suffered from social anxiety. Though Tsuge called it "a terrible work," Kodansha has recently reissued it.

- El Topo (1969), directed and starring Alejandro Jodorowsky, is a cult film shown only once at the Mexico Film Festival. The story is about a gunman who kills philosophers, naturalists, psychics, and desert saints, then sleeps for 20 years before wandering again. There's also a legend that John Lennon bought the distribution rights for El Topo.

- Tokimeki ni Shisu (1984), directed by Yoshimitsu Morita, starring Kenji Sawada and Kanako Higuchi, portrays a terrorist ordered to assassinate but growing frustrated with the organization due to communication issues.

Anti-war, anti-nuclear, anti-authoritarian! A struggle for freedom!

Kojima: "My father was born in 1930 and received pre-war education. He thought he would go to war, but the war ended before that happened. Being from Tokyo, he witnessed incendiary bombs and bombs dropping during the air raids. When I bathed with him, he would make me sing military songs like 'Taharazaka.' If I didn't sing, I'd get beaten. That's the kind of upbringing I had. On the other hand, all the education and the entertainment I experienced were fundamentally anti-war, anti- nuclear, and anti-establishment. That's why I became deeply interested in the question: what exactly is war?"

Iida: "My parents are from a younger generation than Kojima-san's, so I rarely heard direct war experiences. Still, I was always interested in anti-war and anti-nuclear issues. I wondered why, and recently I realized it probably started with Barefoot Gen (Hadashi no Gen). Didn't your elementary school have Barefoot Gen as part of the classroom library?"

Kojima: "Yes."

Iida: "There was also Shirato Sanpei's Kamui Den, a story about class struggles in the Edo period. Both manga really symbolized the mood of educational environments back then. I was deeply influenced by them."

● But Barefoot Gen isn't just about how terrible the atomic bomb was.

Iida: "Exactly. The main boy fights yakuza in the postwar black market and realistically depicts street gangs. It's like City of God!"

Kojima: "Even in the movie Asobi (Play), it's about breaking free from poverty. I'm moved by young people struggling to break out of their shells. The word 'freedom' even differs in English between 'freedom' and 'liberty.' METAL GEAR SOLID 2 isn't just about 'freedom' but about escaping norms—'liberty.'"

Iida: "Kojima-san is anti-war, meaning war is bad, but struggle for freedom is okay."

Kojima: "'Resistance' is a word, right?"

Iida: "Ah, yes, it appeared in Galaxy Express 999. The protagonist Tetsuro Hoshino joins the resistance against the Machine Empire."

Kojima: "In Leiji Matsumoto's manga, there's also the word 'partisan.' For me, the word 'resistance' immediately brings to mind the movies of Andrzej Wajda."

● Both "resistance" and "partisan" are French words meaning popular resistance movements.

Iida: "That's very different from the 'terrorists' making headlines these days."

Kojima: "I always doubt if 'that war' is really justified. When I was a student, there was the 'exam war' and the new university entrance system, and I felt angry and rebellious, like, 'Who decided this?!' That's why I resonated with the notion of resistance and Bakuretsu Toshi (Burst City)."

- City of God (2002), directed by Fernando Meirelles, depicts boys living lawless lives in a rural town near Rio de Janeiro. To the rhythm of lively samba, bullets and blood rain down in this shocking work.

- Andrzej Wajda, an Academy Honorary Award-winning director, participated in anti-German resistance activities during WWII. His debut film generation is based on his experiences. His film Kanał (The Sewer) was the first Polish movie released in Japan and shows Warsaw resistance fighters suffering in sewers.

Hideo Kojima's Works are "Socially Conscious" Games

Iida: "When I think of Hideo Kojima, I think of innovation and surprise. (laughs) You've created television programs and even novels, so I feel like you're someone who is only satisfied when you're creating a new kind of entertainment world."

Kojima: "Well, I think it's just a matter of how to express what I want to say. If something can be best expressed as a novel, I make a novel. If it's better suited for a television program, I make one."

Iida: "In that case, from your perspective, what is the unique appeal of games compared to other forms of media like novels or TV?"

Kojima: "With games, you can directly manipulate the world. It's not just watching or reading — it's participatory. You can act. That's what's different from other media."

Iida: "When I watch your work, Mr. Kojima, I often feel like I'm watching a news documentary. You include topics that are being reported in the news. Your work seems to reflect the current world. That might be why your works feel different from typical video games."

Kojima: "When people say, 'It's like a television drama,' I actually want to say, 'No, it's more like a news program.' (laughs) I think that games should be rooted in the times and society. That's how I express my work."

Iida: "In that sense, how would you define your games?"

Kojima: "If I had to name it, I'd call them 'social games.'"

Iida: "You've made all kinds of works, but they all deal with themes like politics, society, the military, and science fiction. Some may call them SF, but they also deal with the real world."

Kojima: "That's right. Even in science fiction, I always try to return to reality. I find it more interesting to create fictional worlds based on reality."

● For example, how do you design your in-game environments?

Kojima: "Let's say I'm making a Middle Eastern battlefield. I'd start by studying the local political and military situation. If it's realistic, the setting naturally becomes more compelling."

● The action scenes you design also feel realistic and intense.

Kojima: "That's because I've studied a lot. I've even trained overseas. The staff also goes through training. That way, we can portray things more realistically."

● Could you give an example of such training?

Kojima: "For example, we'd go up a mountain with a military training team. Each person gets individual lectures and goes through training. We've had art directors and programmers attend. We try all kinds of things, like parachuting, counter-terrorism training, etc."

Iida: "Even if it's for game development, it's unusual for creators to go that far."

Kojima: "We also watch videos. Like: 'If a terrorist takes hostages in a building, how would you break in? Would you use a simulation or go for a full-on assault?' We study and discuss scenarios like that."

Iida: "You even go so far as to practice room breaching. That's impressive."

Kojima: "Every time we do this, we find that some people get injured. They're so focused they forget it's training. We've had people say things like, 'That move wasn't supposed to happen!' (laughs)"

● There must be many things you don't realize until you experience them firsthand.

Kojima: "Exactly. For example, think about being in the mountains fully equipped in combat gear. If a fellow soldier falls, do you go help them or check if they're dead? Even if you know it's training, it changes you when you actually do it. You realize, 'Ah, this is how heavy a wounded comrade is.' You also learn how important small things are, like making sure you have a firm grip or that your shoulder strap is adjusted correctly. You might think you could pull a grenade out of your chest pouch, but in reality, it could be stuck. Then you wonder, 'What do I do now?' Those are things you can't understand without experience."

Iida: "Your level of research is incredible. It's almost scholarly."

Kojima: "But I actually advise the younger staff the opposite. I tell them: 'First, make it into a game.' (laughs)". But it's true, you have to do things like that.

Iida: "Amazing! You can't learn that kind of thing just from reading books."

Kojima: "On the flip side, some of Mr. Mori's advice can actually be problematic when adapting it into a game."

Iida: "Problematic how?"

Kojima: "In Hollywood, military advisors are involved with films, but the advice they give often includes intentional 'movie lies.' Mr. Mori has published books, but not everything written in them is factual. (Note: Kojima and Mr. Mori know each other.) When I was working on METAL GEAR for the MSX2, I was reading his books—but even those had some falsehoods in them."

Iida: "What do you mean?"

Kojima: "If they wrote the full truth, terrorists or people with malicious intent could read and misuse it. So they deliberately change things just a little. Even military advisors in Hollywood films are careful about that."

Iida: "So that's how it is..."

Kojima: "Sometimes Mr. Mori even sends me emails saying, 'Please delete this after reading.'"

● The English voice acting in METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES has led to some major differences in wording compared to the PlayStation version.

Kojima: "We re-recorded all the voice lines. In the PlayStation version, there were a lot of mistranslations. For example, a crucial line like 'military-industrial complex' was wrongly translated as 'skilled businessman.' The president of the dubbing company even said, 'Please call me a good salesman.'"

Iida: "That's a major mistranslation!"

Kojima: "So we redid the translation from scratch. Also, Director Kitamura totally revamped the demo scenes, so we may have rearranged some of the lines to match. The core of the story remains the same, though."

● Revolver Ocelot spins his gun an insane number of times. That was surprising.

Kojima: "When I said, 'Let's spin it even more,' the staff were taken aback. But we have to do even crazier stuff in METAL GEAR SOLID 3, so it's tough. (laughs)"

Iida: "The other day I saw a live show of Somenosuke. Even though he wasn't there, they were spinning umbrellas like crazy."

● Meryl looks much prettier now—kind of erotic even.

Iida: "It really makes you want to go save her! People often criticize games for having only pretty graphics, but in TWIN SNAKES, the better graphics genuinely improve the experience. It's a great example of that."

● That final fistfight between Liquid Snake and Solid Snake—with cross-counters and uppercuts—totally reminds me of Ashita no Joe.

Kojima: "Exactly! Japanese characters always settle fights with a cross-counter and uppercut! But the final bare-knuckle brawl—some younger staff didn't like that. They said it looked lame."

Iida: "Hahahaha!"

Kojima: "But Director Kitamura totally got it without me even explaining. He was like, 'They'll fight in their underwear at the end!'"

Iida: "Up to that point they dodge missiles and bullets like superhumans, but then in the end they punch each other. They dodge bullets but take punches—that's real manliness."

Kojima: "That's why the headbutts on top of the jeep are amazing too. Those two brothers are tight."

Iida: "Hahaha!"

Kojima: "During motion capture, the actors were actually headbutting each other. We had to put protectors on their heads."

● Kojima's idea of a hero is rooted in 'loneliness.'

Iida: "So you really do love Ashita no Joe, huh?"

Kojima: "Yeah. I love Ashita no Joe, and also Tiger Mask. I still can't forget the ending of Tiger Mask. Japanese heroes are always misunderstood. Like Kamen Rider, who left Shocker and fights alone. Or The Legend of Kamui, where he's a runaway ninja. Heroes aren't always purely righteous. It's not a simple binary of good and evil."

Iida: "They're constantly releasing energy. They're more like eccentrics or gifted misfits."

Kojima: "Tiger Mask says 'I'll become a tiger!' and enters the Tiger's Den, only to awaken to justice and break free. He ends up fighting the very wrestlers trained there. Kamen Rider is kidnapped by Shocker and transformed, yet escapes. These are people who fall into evil, then fight to become good—without being recognized, without rewards, without love. They fight alone. That's my idea of a hero, and it's the kind of hero in METAL GEAR SOLID."

Iida: "That's a little different from today's handsome Heisei Riders. Just because they're heroes doesn't mean they get the girls!"

Kojima: "In Kamen Rider, Hongo Takeshi just twists a knob, and something falls off—he realizes, 'I'm not human!' It shocks him. In Android Kikaider, it's even more intense—his 'conscience circuit' breaks, and he swings between good and evil."

Iida: "So at the heart of characters in Kojima games is a kind of 'identity fracture.'"

Kojima: "Like Snake Plissken from Escape from New York—he's a prisoner, but lives freely, breaking norms. Even if he's ordered to join a mission, he refuses in the end. I like that kind of outlaw."

● He's sent to Shadow Moses island , but in the end, he fights by his own will.

Kojima: "In my games, the protagonist is always deceived. They keep wondering, 'Is this true? Or is this a lie?' and come to their own conclusions. In the end, just when they think it's finally the truth, they act—and the story ends. That's the dramatic structure I use."

- Escape from New York
1981 film. Directed by John Carpenter, starring Kurt Russell. In a future where Manhattan has become a giant prison, Air Force One crashes into the city. A lone special ops soldier, Snake, is sent in to rescue the president.

Delving into the Game Creator's Mind!

Iida: "What would you say is the emotional foundation for your creative work, Kojima?"

Kojima: "Ah, for me, it's always been 'loneliness' since I was a child."

Iida: "I get that. I'm similar. I still go to Fuji Rock Festival alone, sleeping in a solo tent."

Kojima: "I also listen to music alone, often go to concerts alone, and enjoy movies alone—it's all solo entertainment. That's probably why I love movies."

● But game development is a big team effort—how does that feel for you?

Kojima: "That's actually lonely too. The more people there are, the lonelier I feel. The more I interact with people, the more I realize how hard it is to truly understand each other. Director Murai, who leads the current polygon team, and I both call ourselves 'water flea hut people.' We're both like that."

Iida: "With 100 staff members, isn't communication speed an issue?"

Kojima: "I relay everything directly to each team member one-on-one, so delays aren't really the issue. I find even one-on-one communication difficult. The things I want to say—most of it doesn't actually get across."

Iida: "I think it's okay if what I want to say gets misunderstood, and the end result is different from what I expected. But when making games, I do feel like I want to share the process with the team, so I try hard."

Kojima: "Me, for example — if I were stranded alone on a deserted island, with no TV or anything, I'd still be able to live happily by myself. (I can come up with a sad story on my own and cry over it. That's something I regularly do.)"

● You can really cry just from that?

Kojima: "I absolutely can. I could cry right here."

Iida: "Over a made-up story?"

Kojima: "I take reality and twist it just a bit to create a story. Like, what if someone close to me died right now? I imagine it, and a scene plays in my head, with music. Even reading a small article in the newspaper can trigger a whole story in my mind."

Iida: "It's like being a therapist, isn't it?"

Kojima: "The story starts to move on its own, and you can create a story intentionally. With stories, once you've decided on the setting and added characters, the characters start talking in your head on their own. But whether that results in something meaningful is another matter. In great works, it's not when the scenario is finished, but from the initial plot—the first 3 or 4 lines—that everything is decided. When you say, 'It's this kind of story, this kind of game,' and everyone reacts immediately—if you can nail that, the rest of the story will flow naturally. That's the key."

● In Hollywood, there are standard scenario-writing methods. Do you use any of those?

Kojima: "In my case, I don't consciously use those kinds of techniques. I always combine story with the game system. Once I've mentally entered the world I've created, I get so immersed that it becomes a world I like, with heights like this, and people like that... It becomes extremely easy. But I always pull myself out of that state once.I can't recreate the same world. Even if an hour passes and I try to go back into the same world, I just can't recreate it."

Iida: "Actually, I had psychoanalysis recently. Psychoanalysis is an act of exploring the story of your own mind. I started wondering, what was the story of my own mind? And by changing my perspective on that memory, I realized that even sad memories can become happy ones, and I started to feel better."

Kojima: "That's interesting. I've always wanted to try it too. I definitely feel the urge to be analyzed."

Iida: "There was a sort of lump in my heart I wanted to get rid of, and that's why I went for analysis. Do you think it would change the way you create?"

Kojima: "I've started thinking with a bit more distance from myself. I've become able to see myself objectively. That's the essence of therapy—to be able to take an objective view. In the past, my life and my creations were one and the same, but now I've started to separate them. I used to make games driven purely by impulse, but that's changed."

The Origins of the "METAL GEAR" Series

● This is a sudden return to basics, but where does the title "METAL GEAR" come from?

Kojima: "At the planning stage, the name was 'Intruder', meaning infiltrator. But Suzuki had a motorcycle with the same name, so we couldn't use it. It's always like that. 'Snatcher' was originally titled 'Judgment', but there was already a mahjong game with that name. 'Policenauts' was originally titled 'Beyond', but Wolfgang Petersen had a movie called 'Beyond'."

Iida: "So, it's always the second choice title then?"

Kojima: "Exactly. 'METAL GEAR' came at a time when the word 'gear' had just taken root in Japan—it had a kind of ring that appealed to boys. 'Metal' was meant to emphasize a heavy, metallic feel."

● Where did the 'Solid' in 'METAL GEAR SOLID' come from?

Kojima: "It comes from YMO's 'Solid State Survivor'. I especially love Yukihiro Takahashi of YMO. His album had a song by Peter Barakan that was really great—kind of like the band Visage. Also, since this was the third METAL GEAR and now supported 3DCG, 'solid' also referred to the 3D aspect. And 'cube' in GameCube means solid too. So the name 'METAL GEAR SOLID' was a perfect fit for the series."

● This time it's being released on a Nintendo platform—doesn't that bring about certain expectations?

Kojima: "When the PlayStation version came out, I heard from people in the U.S. and Europe who said they played METAL GEAR SOLID with their kids. The parents knew it had intense content, but they played it together anyway. And after finishing the game, they understood the story and its themes, and even sent me letters. That's a very wholesome thing. With the GameCube having a younger audience, I think things like that might happen even more in the future."

Iida: "But for kids, it might be traumatic. Arms getting cut off, bodies crushed—there are intense scenes. 'Ninja Bugeichō' (Tales of the Ninja) also had very graphic limb-severing scenes, but 'METAL GEAR SOLID' has that same raw vibe, like you've seen something you shouldn't have, and that gives it a kind of strange appeal."

Kojima: "Rather than saying 'intense'... my games just have a lot of gags. There's even vomit, you know? Kyle Cooper, who did the opening title sequence for 'METAL GEAR SOLID 2', told me, 'If there's no puke, it's not a Kojima game.' I was like, 'How does he know that?! This guy gets it!'"

Iida: "Haha, that's a B-movie vibe for sure."

Kojima: "If I really thought I was making A-grade stuff, I wouldn't be having Django drag a coffin around in Boktai: The Sun Is in Your Hand!"

● Hahaha. Boktai: The Sun Is in Your Hand is straight out of Django. The character, the coffin—everything!

Iida: "Forever an A-grade staff!"

Kojima: "Even Peter Jackson, who's now directing 'The Lord of the Rings', started out as a low-budget movie director. He's the one who made 'Braindead', after all."

Iida: "Speaking of which, you were selected as one of the 'Top 10 People Who Will Shape the Future' in Newsweek, weren't you? You were compared to Jackson himself."
Kojima: "That was pretty funny. I couldn't tell if I was being praised or roasted."

- Django (1966)
Director: Sergio Corbucci. Starring: Franco Nero, Eduardo Fajardo. A brutal revenge drama about Django avenging his arch-enemy. The image of a man dragging a coffin on a journey became one of the foundational motifs for Kojima's games, including Boktai.

- Braindead (1992 release).
Director: Peter Jackson. A surge of zombie films started in New Zealand! This one is packed with dead-body gags, corpse violence, a musical priest, and even zombies giving birth to children—just a barrage of crude, splatter-filled ideas. Amazing that this director would go on to sweep the Oscars with The Lord of the Rings.

Is the METAL GEAR series a revolution in games!?

● Each METAL GEAR SOLID title takes an incredibly long time to develop. When it takes years to finish, isn't it hard to keep your energy and focus up?

Kojima: "I set up strong barriers for myself to stay focused on development. Like avoiding romance novels or detective stories. Even if my favorite author releases a new book, I tell myself not to read it. Like, 'I shouldn't be reading the latest Teru Miyamoto.'"

● So you really push yourself to the limit to create.

Kojima: "When I started making games, I had nothing to lose. Back then, people around me dismissed game development—'it's just games.' So I worked desperately, thinking, 'I'll show them!'"

Iida: "My first job in game development was as a part-time pixel artist. I remember a senior yelling at me, 'The angle of the elf's ear is wrong! Elf ears should be at a 45-degree angle!'"

Kojima: "In early games, you had four lives, and when they were gone, it was game over. But that rule just became a given over time. There's no real reason to follow it. Yet many game developers still think games must follow those rules. To be extreme about it—if a game doesn't have four lives, some people won't even consider it a game."

● Kojima's games are full of ideas that aren't bound by conventional game rules.

Iida: "Like making the player switch controller ports, or darkening the screen."

Kojima: "I can make games because they don't leave anything behind."

● What do you mean?

Kojima: "Games become unplayable once the hardware is gone. They're like a temporary trend."

● So there's a kind of freedom to that?

Kojima: "Books and movies stick around forever, so you can't release a lot of them. If I were a novelist, I'd be rewriting constantly. It's the same with paintings, right? You wake up in the morning, and what you drew last night suddenly looks awful."

Iida: "I get that. I went to art school too, but I don't really draw anymore. Still, I can release games."

Kojima: "Once a game reaches the user, it becomes their experience. They dissect and interpret it however they like."

Iida: "It only comes to life when the user plays it, right?"

Kojima: "That's why we creators have a point where we say 'this is enough.' That's what lets us finish things. If it's good enough to hand to the player, that's fine. That's why I always stick to the schedule. People say, 'Kojima, you're such a perfectionist,' but every time I hear that, I feel a kind of loneliness."

● It's like a magazine, right? If it serves its purpose in that moment, that's enough. Many people read it and throw it away right after.

Kojima: "Recently there was that Famicom 20th anniversary 'Level X' exhibit, right? That's about trying to preserve parts of the landscape. That's really important. Games are a fleeting kind of 'play.' We don't need one ultimate game to last forever—what matters is having something that fits its time."

Iida: "So games are like the 'play' of cinema. In the sense of being suited to their era—Director Ishii's Burst City really symbolized its time."

Kojima: "Watching it now in the 21st century and watching it in the '80s are completely different experiences. Director Ishii was great at filming industrial zones, but today's Tokyo looks nothing like that anymore."

● The tagline for Burst City used the word "revolution." But nowadays, that word is becoming obsolete. It's a bit of a shame.

Kojima: "I really like words like 'revolution' and 'ideals.' They're exquisite words. I'm not quoting Hiroyuki Itsuki or anything, but 'Someday, I want to die in a country where the revolution has succeeded.' If I said that to kids today, they'd probably go, 'Are you nuts?'"

Iida: "In Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes, we translated it using the word 'revolution.'"

● Director Kojima, maybe you were born a little too late.

Kojima: "I felt kind of lonely not having things like the security treaty protests or student movements during my school days. So I ended up writing novels instead. But even when I showed them to friends at school, it just wasn't very fun."

Iida: "Yeah, I wanted a protest baton too."

Kojima: "When I became an adult, I realized that the future I had imagined, the things I had wanted to do, none of them were really there."

Iida: "So in that sense, Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes is a revolution in gaming that came a little late. If we look at it by century, it's a game from the 104th year of the 20th century—Showa 78. You could say it's the latest release from the Art Theatre Guild."

Kojima: "Haha. Americans say it's Hollywood-like, but it's really not like that at all."

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